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SUBJECT: "HONORABLE COVENANT" FOR COOPERATION AND PEACE IN DHI QAR

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Department of State.
REASON: 1.4 (b)

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¶1. (U) On September 11 tribal, religious and community leaders in Dhi Qar province signed an Honorable Covenant in support of the non-violent resolution of disputes. Governor Aziz Kadhum al-Ugali convened the conference that brought the participants together to sign the Honorable Covenant. There were approximately 200 participants, and the key theme was promoting cooperation and tolerance in the province, including with Coalition Forces.

¶2. (U) As provided to REO Basrah from the Dhi Qar government, the main points of the Honorable Covenant include adherence to the following principles (informal translation follows):

- Achieving full independence for our country through realizing the desire to rid the country of foreign powers as soon as possible.
- Working earnestly towards the reconstruction of Iraq and achieving a long-lasting peace in the country.
- Using Islamic principles that forbid the spilling of blood and money and to protect the sanctity of Islam.
- Forbidding use of arms during conflicts between religious, political and tribal parties.
- Keeping weapons only in the hands of the Iraqi security and military forces.
- Respecting the rule of law and working within the judicial framework when seeking resolution of disputes.
- Making illegal trespassing in public places for personal use.
- Spreading the spirit of tolerance and understanding and rejecting racism and sectarianism.
- Using religious institutions only as places of worship and culture for all people.
- Boycotting and severing relations with any religious, tribal, political, civil society, official and unofficial organizations that do not adhere to the points of this covenant.
- Assuring that government and security officials not abuse their power and do not encroach on people's rights. It is the responsibility of the security forces to ensure enforcement of this.
- Affirming the right of citizens to present complaints to the provincial council if they are subjected to any injustices by a state institution.
- Calling on women to carry out their active roles as mothers, wives and daughters in order to educate those around them to cooperate with the security forces.

The agreement was drawn up by the Dhi Qar provincial council chairman, council members and the governor. It was signed by

representatives from most political parties, tribal leaders, clerics and other local leaders.

¶3. (C) Comment: The undertaking is a positive sign that the governor and provincial council are taking steps to promote cooperation and tolerance not only among the citizens of Dhi Qar but with Coalition Forces as well. The impending turnover of security control from Coalition Forces to the Iraqi Government prompted the Dhi Qar government to present the Honorable Covenant for signature to prominent members of the community. As a precursor to Provincial Iraqi Control (PIC) on September 21, bringing together community leaders to sign such a human rights and security statement is a major public relations coup for the governor. Whether the transition to PIC in Dhi Qar will happen smoothly will not be known for some time, but the agreement establishes the framework needed for PIC to be successful. End comment.

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